

## **P-4: Youth Empowerment in Action**

**Venue:** Statewide

**Goal:** Preventing Initiation of Tobacco Use

**Sponsoring Organizations:** American Cancer Society (ACS), American Lung Association of Washington (ALAW), University of Washington (UW) “Teen Futures Media Network”, Washington State University (WSU), and Department of Health (DOH)

**Abstract:** The Department of Health (DOH) received a 3-year \$2.75 Million grant from the American Legacy Foundation to build capacity for Youth Empowerment in Washington State. The research question that is being investigated through funded states is whether “empowerment” is a significant protective factor against tobacco use. DOH funded three statewide organizations to create separate structures for youth engagement in community and school settings: the American Cancer Society (ACS) Project Speak Out! youth leadership training; the American Lung Association of Washington (ALAW) Teens Against Tobacco Use (TATU) peer education program; and the University of Washington Teen Futures Media Network (UW) “Teens, Tobacco and Media” media literacy project. Although differing in content, the approaches of these programs are the same: provide instruction for youth, and then engage youth in meaningful activity that puts information into action to influence their peers. Early evaluation results for the projects indicate that susceptibility to tobacco use was decreased among youth participants. Continuing evaluation efforts will seek to confirm these findings, and investigate impacts within a variety of youth populations.

**Recommendations:** Statewide contractors will continue to provide training and support for youth leadership, TATU peer education, and media literacy programs in a variety of settings throughout the state. Each of these contractors has a mechanism to provide small grants to local youth groups that support delivery of programs; local contractors are encouraged to take advantage of these resources. Additional evaluation of program impacts among teens will be conducted during the coming year to assess the effectiveness of the program among a variety of youth.

**Contact for more information:**

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